1944.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO START A CHURCH

by

Keith Conning
Staff Assistant

1948

Unit of City and Industrial Work
Jacob A. Long,Ph.D., Secretary
Board of National Missions
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO START A CHURCH

by

Ralph Sterling
Chief Assistant

1964

SUGGESTION ON HOW TO START A CHURCH

A trip through the suburbs of a great number of cities, large and small, shows that the moving of 70,000,000 Americans and the jump in population from 132,000,000 to 144,000,000 in the past eight years has turned farm land into suburbs and suburbs into cities. Even quiet villages have been caught up in the hum of business and industrial life. The factories built during the war "in the midst of nowhere" are, for the most part, running still and are being surrounded by homes, stores and amusement centers.

It is no wonder that one of the avowed aims and vital challenges of the New Life Movement is to start at least 300 new churches in a three year period. Too often the church is the last force to go into the community; or there may be a swarm of struggling little churches; or the "regular" churches may be waiting "to see if the people will stay" or hesitant because "they are not our sort of people".

Haste, indifference, or inexperience, however, may handicap us in our work of church extension, which is such a necessary requirement in making America a truly Christian nation. On the other hand, one presbytery after another says, "We have not started a new church in 17 (or 25 or 40) years". As a result of numerous requests from various parts of the country from individuals, churches, presbyteries and synods the following suggestions are presented from the experience of the whole denomination in varied places and circumstances for those who seek to make America Christian through church extension.

THE IDEA

Where does the idea that perhaps a new church should be started originate? Ideally, and sometimes in fact, it comes from the community itself. People who have moved from their old homes (50% of our members moved in eight years) find that they are too far from the old church for themselves or for their children to get to Sunday School or weekday activities at the church with the regularity they would like; a young married couple, who have drifted away from church, find the need of the church increasing as their family increases; a loyal layman with the missionary spirit starts a Sunday School in his home and meets a ready response in the neighborhood. If the idea of having a church arises in the community itself, it is blessed from the start. If the idea does not arise or is not evident, it is one of the responsibilities of those who want the kingdom to spread to stimulate the sense of need for the church until the people of the community say, "Wouldn't it be fine if we had a church of our own".

More than likely, however, the faithful Christians of the new area are trying to find an existing church, however inconvenient or unsatisfying it may be, to meet their needs. The idea of starting a new work may arise in an individual who passes a new community on his way to work, or who through his work or social contacts comes to realize that there is a group of people who have no church. A pastor or elder may become aware, through members of their local church moving into a particular section of town, that a new, unchurched area has grown up without anyone planning it or being conscious of the development. It may be that the presbytery, fired by the New Life Movement will seek to take stock of itself to see if, within its bounds, there are areas, large or small, without adequate churching.

Whether the idea originates in the community, in the mind of an individual, a church or a presbytery that has watched or become aware of the unchurched area, the next step is to take stock to see if the first impression that a church is needed is correct.

TESTING THE IDEA

Starting a new church in itself need not be a good thing. It may be so small and struggling that it remains a burden to its own members, the community, and the denomination. In some cases existing churches can serve the area better than a new church. Thousands of churches have been closed for various good reasons as well as for lack of funds and leadership. We must, therefore, try to assess the probable future of the proposed church.

Let us first find out how many unchurched people there are in the community. One rule of thumb is that there should be 1500 people without a church before a new work is begun in a suburban community. How far is the proposed church to be from existing churches? Cooperating denominations of the Home Missions Council, of which we are a part, believe that churches should be a mile apart in built-up suburban areas, or closer in congested and apartment house districts and farther apart in sparsely settled areas. Estimating three or four people to a house in a new community and referring to the automobile speedometer should answer the questions of how large the population without a church may be and also the distance to the nearest church.

Care should be taken to inquire thoroughly if work has begun, even if a church spire is not in evidence. Some of our own churches have a strong outreach in the community even though they are still in the basement of a home, the manse, a school (with or without a sign), a lodge or Legion hall, a converted dance hall or beer garden, a fire hall, pumping station and even a redecorated chicken house. We do not seek to complete with other churches just because they do not have adequate buildings.

A canvass is necessary to find the facts and spirit of the community. It may be that the community is predominantly Roman Catholic, Jewish, Baptist, or Methodist, for example. It may be that another denomination or a more distant Presbyterian church should take the area under its wing in an extension program of calling, and service, perhaps providing cars and buses when necessary, without starting a new and separate congregation.

A form similar to that on the next page will probably give the necessary information. These cards are available through the Unit of City and Industrial Work of the Board of National Missions. (15¢ per pad of 50) One of its chief values of this card is the bottom section which permits a separation of those who give their denominational preference as "Catholic", "Methodist", etc., but who have long since become inactive, from those who are already taken care of by their own churches. If friendly inquiry reveals that the family attends its own church no more than once or twice a year, it would seem that someone should take responsibility for bringing the family into active church affiliation, presumably the new church in the immediate neighborhood.

From the canvass cards very useful "block maps" may be prepared. If those who do the door to door calling are carefully instructed, the same Unit also can provide "Some Suggestions for Church-Community Survey" and "The House to House Canvass" by Rev. Everett L. Perry. A large card or sheet of typewriter paper divided by a lengthwise line can be used to indicate a block of each street. The house numbers or relative location of the houses can be indicated as follows:

Evergreen Avenue

(7th Day Adventist) Pickard 17☐
(Jeh. Witnesses) Connor 21☐
(want children in S.S.) Barbey (up)
(would come with Mrs. James) Derby(down) 25☐

not at home after 3 calls 41☐

not home (called 5 times) 61☐

☐16 Smith (no church)
☐20 Jones (Baptist don't attend)
☐24 James (Presby.attend 1st Ch.)
☐28 Lowell (Luth. want to send children to new S.S.)
☐32 Hogarth (R.C. inactive may attend new church)
☐36 Abbott (Ep. attend own church regularly)
☐40 Zane (Not interested)
☐44 Marlowe (Presby.can teach in S.S.)
☐50 Pope (R.C. attend St. Mary's church)

Gardner St.

Sunset Boulevard

From the canvass cards very useful "block maps" may be prepared. If those who do the door to door calling are carefully instructed, the same Unit also can provide "Some Suggestions for Church-Community Survey" and "The House to House Canvass" by Rev. Everett L. Perry. A large card or sheet of typewriter paper divided by a lengthwise line can be used to indicate a block of each street. The house numbers or relative location of the houses can be indicated as follows:

Evergreen Avenue

(7th Day Adventist) Pickard 17☐	☐16 Smith (no church)
(Meb. Witnesses) Connor 21☐	☐20 Jones (Baptist don't attend)
(want children in S.S.) Hardy (up)	☐24 James (Presby.attend 1st Ch.)
(would come with Mrs. James) Derby(down)25☐	☐28 Lowell (Luth. want to send child- ren to new S.S.)
	☐32 Horarch(R.C. negative may attend new church)
not at home after 3 calls 11☐	☐36 Abbott (Bp. attend own church regularly)
	☐40 Zane (Not interested)
	☐44 Marlowe (Presby.can teach in S.S.)
not home (called 5 times) 61☐	☐50 Foge (R.C. attend St. Mary's church)

Sunset Boulevard

Such information is invaluable when tabulated in this way. Neighbors can bring neighbors, and children can call for other children, but without some such small scale map it is almost impossible to visualize the parish. From these block maps a smaller scale spot map of the parish will later be useful, showing members with one color pin, star or mark, and prospects with another color. In this way weak areas within the parish will stand out where men or women of the church need to call, organize a circle, or show some special effort.

A canvass is more than a means of gathering information. Enthusiasm or hope for the new church may be aroused. Friendly interest and Christian concern for an isolated or apparently forgotten family may be a service of real value. Preparation for an announcement of the time and place for a community meeting to plan the church may be made.

A survey of the community goes beyond the canvass. To know the needs of the community and its people is to be in a position to enter the life of the area from the beginning. For example, if the greatest need is for an addition to the local school, a wise pastor can prove the sincerity of the church's interest in the people of the community by working with those who feel the need of the addition or organizing the community so that the need may be met. In so doing he will also provide himself with an open door into every home in the community although this is not the goal but a by-product of a sincere spirit of service.

The pamphlet mentioned above (page 3) will be invaluable in conducting such a survey. In certain instances counsel or assistance is available from the Board of National Missions or the Federal Council of Churches. Reference should at least be made to the surveys and studies made in the major cities by these or other agencies.

APPROVAL OF PRESBYTERY

If the canvass and survey indicate that a new work should be started, and if presbytery has not taken previous action approving the project from its inception it is important to get presbytery's approval before proceding further. Presbytery should then request the approval of the proper comity committee before work is started. Presbytery's responsibility continues until the service of organization, the form for which is in the church constitution.

COMITY

When those who are backing the new work have secured presbytery's approval, it is essential that clearance be made with the local, city county or state council of churches comity committee. The work of Christ has been seriously hampered at times when sister denominations in good faith start out with enthusiasm at the same time in the same area, or when one denomination has received the approval of the other denominations to go ahead and a second church enters the field without clearance, sometimes after costly and sacrificial groundwork has already been completed by the first church on the field. There is enough work for all of us without dissipating our efforts in competition.

In those areas where comity does not exist, such as some sections of the south or southwest, sometimes the ministerial association acts as a comity committee. In such instances it is possible to go ahead after conferring with this committee. Where there is no such association, consultation with other ministers who might be involved or whose work might be affected by the establishment of a new congregation is in order. This courtesy is the basis of being able to tell the community that "ours is a community church for all denominations " or " we represent the Prostestant forces of this area." Such an appeal is particularly strong with former servicemen who have seen the denominations work together through their chaplains. There are also innumerable lay people who welcome such an approach after the sorry spectacle of rampant denominationalism with which so many are familiar.

Necessary church extension should not be dropped or unduly delayed because of the opposition of a dominant church within the presbytery of a denomination within the council of churches. New work, like other projects, can be carried on when the majority votes to begin the work. The work then becomes the responsibility of the presbytery of church council and can expect its support and backing.

SPONSORING COMMITTEE

When proper clearance has been secured, the question arises (if it has not already been settled) as to who shall be responsible for leadership in the project. The answer to this question relates to the question of where the idea for the project originated. There is no one best way to organize all new work, although there is usually a best way in each particular instance.

Since presbytery, in the long run, does the official organizing of churches, it may be preferred to have the National Missions, Church Extension of Strategy Committee of presbytery either be the sponsoring committee of the project, or in larger presbyteries, delegate their responsibility to a sub-committee or a special committee representative of the parties interested in the field in question. In many instances a new church is mothered by an established church, in which case the session of the mother church or a special committee appointed by the session would be in charge of getting the work started. If, on the other hand, it is a completely interdenominational project, the sponsoring committee may be a sub or special committee of the council of churches.

Generally speaking, the sponsoring committee handles the canvass and survey, clears first with presbytery and then secures a comity allocation (where comity exists), arranges for the time and place and leadership to begin the work and after that stay as far in the background as possible. When needs arise, however, such close attention must be given to the work that the committee knows the situation thoroughly and also knows how to deal with the innumerable surprises that attend the organizing of a new church.

A Mission

Several methods are used in starting new churches. One is for a church to start a new work as its mission.

The church with such a thought will need to release its minister, teachers and other leaders, particularly at the start, in order to provide for a program

of religious education, the sacraments, personal counselling, preaching and financing. A Sunday School should not be started without looking forward either to the organization of the adult congregation or their transportation to another church.

If the mother church can look forward to such a program an ideal relationship has been begun. There may be a stronger tie of personal interest and support that is often lacking in a presbytery sponsored work. It does the home church good to see the results of its efforts. Care must be used however, to see that the new church is not tied too closely to its mother's apron strings. Through the years independence must be encouraged. Otherwise, a weak group, impoverished of leadership and self-support may result. Another denomination will likely establish a nearby independent work regardless of comity; and rightly so.

Presbytery is responsible for the mission work within its bounds. Where missions of individual churches are unnaturally delayed in the development of self-government, self-propagation and self-support it is up to the presbytery to provide a solution for this problem.

Where no single neighboring or interested church or churches is prepared to start a mission, and where it is clear that work should be begun, it is presbytery's responsibility to secure the finances, leadership and program for the new work.

CHURCH EXTENSION BY COLONIZATION

When a church discovers that a large number of its members live in a new community at some distance from their building, it is faced with a dilemma. If the city church attempts to bring back the members who have moved away, more and more of them, particularly the children, will be lost from the Presbyterian church to a nearer church or, more often, to no church at all. On the other hand, few pastors and sessions enjoy seeing a large number of their members dismissed to other churches while it is possible for them to return to their own church.

Strategic work has been done to show the way out of this dilemma by those churches who have had the foresight to establish "colonies". The First Church of Oklahoma City, for example, held a commissioning service for over 200 of its members who were being sent out to form the nucleus for a new church in the community to which they had moved. At the same service a check for $20,000 was given to the new congregation towards its building fund. The First Church of Albuquerque similarly commissioned 175 of its members to start the Immanuel Church and purchased a splendid lot as a future location for the congregation's building. Both new congregations are thriving and do great credit to the statesmanship of the leaders of their mother churches. Meanwhile the mother churches have gained spiritual strength and have continued a strong numerical increase. The main problem is for churches to establish such colonies while they are still strong.

It is also feasible for two or more congregations of presbytery to join in such a colonizing effort. Such united support should go far toward assuring the success of such a project.

CHURCH EXTENSION BY RELOCATION

A church, in taking stock of itself, may find that it is far from the geographical center of its members. This may indicate, either that the immediate community is not being served adequately or that the church should consider relocating.

By a thorough-going door-to-door canvass it is not difficult to determine whether or not the neighbors of the church attend any church regularly. If they do attend other churches, a relocation may be in order. It sometimes happens that changes in the community and church membership point the way, not to starting a new church in a new community, but to moving the poorly located church into the new area into which many of its members have moved already. This assures a strong nucleus for an enlarged congregation and ordinarily some financial backing from the sale of the existing building, so that there is immediate prospect of providing part of the home for the congregation in the new location. Sometimes more than one church go together in such a move.

THE COMMUNITY CHURCH

The policy of our church has been to reach out to the people who are unreached by any other church within a given geographical area or parish. We have never tried to confine our work to Presbyterian or former Presbyterian families, or, on the other hand, to proselyte among Christian people who are active in other denominations. Therefore the number of people of Presbyterian background in a community should not determine the success or failure of a church going into a new area. It is more the rule than the exception that a community Presbyterian church receives members from 20 or more denominations. We could not confine our work to those of Presbyterian background and still live up to the spirit of outreach of the New Life Movement and the claims of the gospel. Most people claim some church connection or preference. But most people in a new community with small children, where there is no church, have no current active church membership.

The fact is that in accepting a comity allocation or similar agreement among the churches we obligate ourselves to reach beyond sectarianism and minister to the needs of people from every background. An allocation assumes that the new church will provide a varied enough ministry of the sacraments, preaching, Christian education, pastoral services, community work and counselling that the average member of the other Council of churches will find a spiritual home therein. It is not only possible to do this within the framework of Presbyterianism, but it fits the genius of our church better than most. Our democracy allows for those of varied background to express themselves. Our form of baptism allows for those of the Disciple of Christ or Baptist churches to be immersed at their request, unless the form appears to them to be in itself a means of salvation. Our service is between the liturgical and the very informal, our government between the episcopal and the congregational. After years of leadership in the ecumenical movement we are reaching the parishes with the idea of the real unity of the Christian church in every new church we organize.

In order to get across to the community the idea we represent it is often wise to call the church "The _____ Community Church, Presbyterian", with the Presbyterian in smaller type, that is, subordinated to the idea of the

name of the church. After all, we are trying to work for a Christian more than a Presbyterian community. This in no sense weakens either the tie to the denomination or the strength coming from the denomination.

A PLACE OF MEETING

As has been mentioned, churches these days start in the most unlikely places rented or otherwise. Although it is rough going to have no church building, it is a rare, and usually unwise thing, to give a congregation yet unborn a building. The congregation may suffer for years thereafter from parasitism.

In some presbyteries the schools house numerous congregations. Elsewhere the school board has never been approached in the right manner, so that it is assumed that the schools are not available. Again it is sometimes impossible to break the apathy or antagonism of the School Board. One potent factor in Presbyterian church extension is our comity approach whereby we can assure the board that the various denominations represented in the council of churches or ministerial association have given their permission for our work to begin with the understanding that they will not seek the same field or seek the use of the same school. This assurance relieves the School Board of the undesirable choice of saying one church can enter a building while others must keep out. Sometimes Roman Catholic and Protestant churches use the same school at mutually agreeable hours. If the majority of the churches decide among themselves, the board is in a strong position to allow the building to be opened for whatever charge seems mutually fair; in fact, sometimes there is no charge.

The main objective is to find some place as centrally located as possible, and sometimes it is not possible to find a location in the community itself, to begin the work. The homes of the new congregation are generally willingly offered for occasional meetings, although it is difficult to have a full program of activities without returning too often to the homes of the more faithful ones. Wherever services are held on Sunday, the homes are ordinarily the base of numerous weekday meetings. This, of course, was the life of the New Testament church and of many a new church today.

The securing of a proper location and meeting place is usually a matter of tact and some persuasion, but the fact that there is no existing church building need in no way prevent the starting of a new congregation.

THE LEADER

It is often assumed that since only a few people are reached at first and since there is very little program to begin with that all that is needed is a leader who can preach on Sunday and take part in a Sunday School. Nothing can be farther from the truth. It is true that a seminary student or a retired minister can carry on a work that has been established with only a small amount of time and energy. But where a church is started from scratch all the energy of the finest and most experienced minister available is required. Not only does he have to call incessantly, but he must carry on a total church program with little or no experienced assistance or else he will not reach the community.

Where the need is felt for church extension work a presbytery, either directly or through the Board of National Missions, often provides for a field missionary. This man or woman may need to begin by surveying and later canvassing several new and promising areas and by studing spot maps of various churches of the presbytery in order to find the most needy and promising fields of endeavor.

Having secured an area of good promise, he would proceed to secure presbytery and comity approval and take the other steps as outlined until a church is securely founded. This worker may then move on to begin another work or may remain as the regularly installed pastor. Throughout, presbytery's National Missions Committee supervises his work and receives regular, detailed reports of the progress and problems of his work.

PETITIONING PRESBYTERY

Presbyterian law requires that a petition be circulated in the community in which a new church is to be established. This petition is a request that presbytery organize a church. In the past misunderstanding has arised over the contents and purpose of this petition. A person would sign with the impression that he was requesting that a church be started in his community but without any idea of becoming a Christian or a member of the church to be established.

Caution should be exerted, therefore, in circulating the petition for organization, so that the list of signers would, as nearly as possible, be the list of charter members. At any rate, the petitioners should be those who intend to belong to the new church, if organized by presbytery.

CHARTER MEMBERS

After announcements have been sent to everyone in any way interested that services and/or Sunday School is starting with the mention of time and place and the sponsors, and after services have been held for some time, should the work grow, the question will be asked, "When do we organize a church"? or "When can we have a church of our own"?

There is no easy answer. Generally 50 or more adults should apply for membership in the infant church. Sometimes, however, a delay in organizing will harm the work, or it may seem wise to hold open the charter membership for a period of time, so that all who unite with the church within a certain stated period will be enrolled as charter members.

If the new church is sponsored by a mother church it may be that a membership may be built up over a period of time by having the session of the mother church receive the members of the daughter church with the understanding that their attendance, contributions and loyalty will be to the daughter and not to the mother church. In this way young people can be received as they come to "the age of discretion".and adults need not be lost for lack of the tie of membership. Then, when the time is ripe, the session of the mother church would dismiss the entire congregation of the new church to its own separate organization on the day of organization. Officers can also be elected by the the mother church from the daughter congregation to serve in the church-to-be.

INSTRUCTIONS OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

It is not uncommon for a new church to receive half or more of its charter members on confession of faith. Those who become members by letter of transfer come from many denominations and are also unfamiliar with Presbyterianism. Moreover many Presbyterians are strangely unfamiliar with Presbyterianism. On the other hand, to withstand the growing pains of a new congregation, coming from innumerable places, backgrounds and denominations, it is essential that the people thoroughly understand both the beliefs and the form of government of the church to which he belongs. This in no way contradicts the idea that this is a church for the whole community. The members must agree on the basic principles of belief and the basic principles of action before any church can be a church.

It is important, therefore, that classes for all new members be held to instruct them, and to answer questions regarding basic beliefs and also to explain the duties of elders, trustees and deacons, the function of the session, presbytery, synod and general assembly, the duties of church membership, the world-wide work of the church and the benevolences to which each new member is expected to contribute. A complete coverage of envelopes and pledge cards can be assumed as part of such a course of instruction. If care is exerted at the point of instruction of members much of the division, and misunderstanding that often rocks a new church will be nipped in the bud.

BENEVOLENCES

Arithmetic would seem to indicate that a new congregation should become self-supporting before making any sizeable contributions toward benevolences. Experience teaches, however, that a congregation that starts on this premise never gets large enough to do its share for others, whatever its size may be.

A group that is preoccupied with its own struggle for existence is poverty-stricken from the start and may be expected to develop serious internal difficulties and grow weak. A church that is aware of and giving to others, despite its own known needs, may be expected to grow, reach out to welcome others and be strong spiritually from the beginning.

A ten per cent contribution toward benevolences would be a minimum expectation from a new congregation. Sometimes 25-30% is set from the beginning and yearly steps are taken toward the ideal of 50% for benevolences and 50% for current expenses.

BUILDING STEP BY STEP

Building conditions being what they are and probably will be for some years, the new church may look forward to a real problem in providing a home for itself. In many instances the mother church or presbytery will assist financially. Sometimes a presbytery campaign or per capita tax will take care of this matter.

Fortunately the Board of National Missions, at the request of the General Assembly has made provision through benevolences receipts for certain limited help in the form of grants and loans and counsel for lots and buildings to supplement what the presbytery and local church can provide. A thoroughgoing campaign for funds in the new church and community will be necessary both for the good of the congregation and for the money that will be raised in this manner.

THE LOCATION

Particularly in these days the building program is carried on a step at a time. First a lot is secured in the most favorable location possible with off the street parking, (which is required by law in more and more cities) on a corner, and with plenty of room for expansion. Since the cost of the lot is only one of 33 items on the list relating to the building it is well that the most nearly ideal location possible by secured.

A large map of the community is an excellent help in making a spot map of the congregation (before or after organization). Each individual member can be designated by a colored star or pin at the location in the block in which he resides. Another color may be used to indicate prospective members, such as those who attend church occasionally, parents of Sunday School children, etc. The spot map is the quickest means of determining accurately the geographical center of the membership.

Convenience of location for children must be taken into account, particularly since they are the first to start to church in a new community. One metropolitan board of education places schools close enough together so that no child need walk more than eight blocks, others use six blocks as their standard. They find that absences tend to increase if children have to travel farther than this to school. The church, without the benefit of truant officers can benefit by this board's experience.

Enough land should be secured to allow for even an enthusiant's picture of the future development of the church and community. When a church has to expand by purchasing an adjacent building and lot and tearing down or moving the building in order to expand, the lack of foresight of the earlier leaders is always lamented. Worse still is the fate of the church that must abandon its buildings and relocate de novo. The expense of moving a thriving congregation is tremendous. How much better for the congregation to have purchased a lot at least 120' x 120', preferably doubling one of these dimensions. Sometimes a whole block is available. Saving on land may later mean multiplied cost of other items.

The location of the lot should be finally cleared through presbytery and comity. Proximity even to non-cooperating churches such as the Roman Catholic or the sects is a contradication before the community of our avowed aim of establishing a church for the whole community.

Where there is natural center to a community, such as a business center, square or circle, however, by agreement, more than one church may be located at the center to serve a large population fanning out in several directions.

A word of caution should be noted concerning donated lots. In some developments, the real estate promoter finds it advantageous to tell the prospective buyers that a church, particularly a community church, is planning to build in the community. Lots are occasionally offered to the church also by well meaning members of the new church either gratis or at a reduced cost. Here again, the important question is not how much the lot costs, but the size and location. It is better to risk offense in refusing a gift or concession in price rather than to relinquish the proper location for the future church. If the lot location is right it is worth buying. It has also happened that individuals want a church or particularly a Presbyterian church where it is not needed. In the case of a new real estate development it is best to consider with care, also,

the figures as to the number of lots sold and the homes to be built instead of the dreams in the mind of the developer.

Plans should be secured from a competant church architect to include adequate space for the sanctuary, educational building, weekday activities, etc. If the lot has been wisely selected, the architect will be able to provide drawings for a building that can be erected in two or more stages, one of which should not be a basement. The choice before the people is then, which part is most important and can be built with the money available from all sources. When all local, community, presbytery, and synod funds have been canvassed, the Board of National Missions can be approached through the National Missions Committee of presbytery in an effort to determine what aid may be available for the new church. In no case should a contract be signed for any work until the money for the completed unit that is to be contracted for, is in sight, nor should a cost plus contract be signed.

One of the advantages of building in two or three steps is that the congregation can provide for its needs as it grows without suffering from the burden of an overwhelming debt load. If the growth exceeds expectations, plans for the second unit can be enlarged accordingly. If growth does not materialize the congregation is not overwhelmed by debt on a single complete building. An established church needs about one seat for every two or three members, though more may be needed in a new and growing church and community. We sometimes suffer from poorly concealed jealousy of our Roman Catholic brethren who have large numbers of workers. One reason is that they use their sancturay over and over each Sunday. We on the other hand put our money into brick and mortar for a large congregation. They put their money into manpower. More and more, Protestant people are holding duplicate morning services, particulary in the special seasons of the year. Building for an Easter congregation places a definite limitation upon the program and outreach of the church.

THE ARCHITECT

A competent church architect should be secured. So few churches have been built since the depression and during the war that many fine architects have had no experience in planning churches. A visit to other churches will provide the congregation with ideas and may suggest to them the architect of a church that is particularly well suited to the needs of its particular congregation.

The architect will need to have a full outline of the church's proposed program in the new building with figures on the present and estimated attendance at each activity. The architect's fee many run up to 6% of the cost of the building, and is generally, but not always, included in the cost. Materials provided by Dr. Albert Conover, Director of the Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture of the Federal Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York, New York will prove helpful. The architectural consultant of the Board of National Missions assists by reviewing plans wherever a building grant is involved.

RAISING THE MONEY

Repeated attempts to "raise money for our building" soon defeat their own purposes. It is preferable to have an outside expert plan a thoroughgoing campaign with pledges to come in over a 24 or 30 month period.

Seven times the current expense plus benevolence receipts is a safe top cost for the building. Of this amount four-seventhscan be raised over a 30 month period with a well-planned campaign and three-sevenths can be paid for by securing a loan to mature over a ten-year period. Continuous contact with the presbytery, synod, and national executives will be well advised in the matter of building as well as other services related to the beginning of new work.

OVERSIGHT OF THE WORK

After the congregation is organized and until it is entirely self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating it is under the care of the National Missions Committee of its presbytery. In other words no new Presbyterian church is left stranded to sink or swim especially in the formative years of the church's life. If there are problems of leadership, finances, personalities or program either the National Missions Committee or another appropriate committee of presbytery is responsible for the welfare of the new church. This in no way detracts from the ordinary self-government of the local congregation, but it does relate the congregation definitely to the total life and program of the whole Christian Church and more especially the Presbyterian branch of the church. It means that the congregation has the strength and support of the denomination behind it in times of need and that it can expect the oversight and discipline of the presbytery where that may be necessary.

Note: A Suggested Reference Book

A complete and extremely helpful book on starting a new church is called "A Church is Born" by Dwight H. Shelhart(Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, $2.00). The author has spent twenty years in the specialized work of starting new churches under the United Lutheran Church.

Such matters as the "Choosing a Field", "Adult Instruction" (important for all charter members, particularly in the polity and responsibility of members in a Presbyterian Church), "The Parish Register and Records" etc. are extremely practical for any church.

Presbyterian readers will note that the committee of the congregation, later the council, is an entirely different form of government from our own as is the service of organization which among us, is always conducted by the presbytery. So also we would have no practice service, confirmation of members from other churches, signing of membership cards. We would not expect or encourage a minister to call during the Every Member Canvass, though the training of canvassers is properly stressed. These and other matters that apply to Lutheran more than to Presbyterian practice in no way detract from this thorough and detailed description of starting a church. It is recommended to every individual or committee who would learn from the experience of an expert who learned by doing the job himself.